

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

# THE MISSING CIRCLE

Naufus Ramírez Figuerón, *Child on Chair with Bird*, 2019; Cast aluminum, fiberglass, polystyrene and fabric, 113 x 53 x 60 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist and Proyectos Ultravioleta, Ciudad de Guatemala. Commissioned by Kadist



# THE MISSING CIRCLE

October 30, 2019 - February 2, 2020

Galleries A, B and The Foundry

**Participants:** Pavel Aguilar, Carlos Amoraes, Jonathas de Andrade, Edgardo Aragón, Asociación de Mujeres Tejiendo Sueños y Sabores de Paz Mampuján, Fredi Casco, Rometti Costales, Sam Durant, León Ferrari, Joscelyn Gardner, Beatriz González, Pierre Huyghe, Guillermo Kuitca, Cristóbal Leht, Jesse Lerner, Alfredo López Morales, Teresa Margolles, Noé Martínez, Cildo Meireles, Movimiento Arte y Cultura, Eustáquio Neves, Nohemi Pérez, Naufus Ramírez Figueroa, Antonio Reynoso, Pablo Swezey, Carla Zaccagnini

For anthropologist Michael Taussig, the inscription of Latin American political history into landscape has frequently outlined a space of death that "...has a long and rich culture. It is there where the social imagination has populated its metamorphosing images of evil and the underworld." As a consequence of imperial politics and colonial exploitation, the space of death is a heterotopian expanse where terrestrial beings and supernatural creatures live, die, and rebirth. It is also where, as suggested by Julio Cortázar, a missing circle in Dante's infernos prevails, one that was created and populated by our ruling classes.

*The Missing Circle* departs from the shared experience of death and extinction, and its various manifestations that has traversed the Latin American region since colonial times. From the figure of the undead, who incarnated early capitalist slave economies such as the exploitation of the Brazilian gold miners, the endlessly toiling of Haitian zombies in sugar plantations, and the forced labor of indigenous people in Colombian rubber camps or Mexico's *henequén* haciendas. In the missing and the stain that fought military dictatorships, guerrillas, and civil wars in Guatemala, Paraguay, Chile, Peru, or Argentina for a large part of the 20th century. Or, more recently, the haunting bodies of those fallen to drug wars that countries such as Mexico have waged on their citizens.



Like a fable providing an allegorical approach to the Latin American social scenery, *The Missing Circle* revisits particular episodes in the region's political history to explore the role that counted corpses and unaccounted souls play in the world of the living, not only as casualties of an institutionalized violence and bare life but also, and more importantly, as the emancipating agents at the heart of new political formations. In other words, the dead without bodies and the bodies without life that not only haunt our memories of the past but also linger in our expectancies for the future.

*The Missing Circle* examines the spaces of re-presentation where the boundaries between subject and object, reality and fiction, are blurred; where temporary markers acquire a different morphology; spaces in which tangible facts and mythical stories, historical individuals and fictional characters, reveal the connective pathways between facts and places, objects and subjects, witnesses and narrators, protagonists and spectators. The resulting narrative, however, does not aspire to unearth truth nor fabricate fiction. It addresses instead—paraphrasing Taussig—the social being of truth, which is not whether the facts are real, but what the politics of their interpretation and representation are.

### **The antechamber of the undead**

Where the individual is deprived of all agency, but discovers his power of resistance. Where a liminal state is manifest, behind which emerge the specters of dispossession, dismemberment, and desecration, and the metaphor of the undead as a body devoided of will and strength. Where fear begins to infiltrate the social landscape, and the resurrection of the undead lead them to avenge their own people, outlining a space in which the synchronic constructions of history start to take shape.

(Carla Zaccagnini, Joscelyn Gardner, Sam Durant, Noé Martínez, Cildo Meireles, Eustaquio Neves, Jonathas de Andrade)

## **The configuration of the space of death**

On how the metabolism of terror, inherited from colonial practices such as slavery and exploitation, has permeated in different times and contexts and has replicated itself. On how the orchestration of fear and the muffling of memories inhabit an extension that demarcates a space of death, as the point of silencing is not to erase memory but to direct it to the depths of a personal retreat (Taussig). There, dream and reality interlace in a worldly nightmare whose pockmarked landscape holds the traces of displacements and migrations, disappearances and deaths, putting to the test how bodies and objects are presented and re-presented, and assessing their ability to bear witness and tell a story.

**(Carlos Amoraless, Edgardo Aragón, León Ferrari, Pierre Huyghe, Cristóbal Lehyt, Teresa Margolles, Nohemí Pérez, Naufus Ramírez Figueroa, Pablo Swezey, Rometti Costales)**

## **The production of truth and the negation of oblivion**

On imagination as a form of re-presentation. On fiction as a strategy of resistance. Where fantastic characters and mythological figures (zombies, mummies, pishtacos) hypostasize to underscore the need to read fiction against the grain, not as illusion or make-believe, but as a form of documentation and mediation that escapes historical positivism (Anselm Franke). On how the role of the human and the non-human, of living and dead matter, of victim and victimizer, has changed over the years and across various territories. Where the way in which bodies confer and how they make themselves heard is being discussed.

**(Carlos Amoraless, Beatriz González, Guillermo Kuitca, Cristóbal Lehyt, Alfredo López Morales, Nohemí Pérez, Naufus Ramírez Figueroa, Arturo Reynoso, Asociación de Mujeres Tejiendo Sueños y Sabores de Paz Mampuján, Talleres de Arpilleras)**

## **Social death and the institutionalization of violence**

Where the circle closes and the assorted protagonists come into view again (from the deceased to the survivor to the disappeared), confined to a role-play that condenses anew the phantasmagorical presence of the living dead. Where dispossession and social death—what some have defined as a new strand of the supernatural (Colin Dayan)—point to a different type of legality in which the exception has become the rule and violence has been institutionalized. Where a strategy for the conciliation of historical narratives and for the consolidation of new political formations has sprouted.

**(Pavel Aguilar, Edgardo Aragón, Fredi Casco, León Ferrari, Jesse Lerner, Guillermo Kuitca, Teresa Margolles, Cildo Meireles, Movimiento Arte y Cultura, Rometti Costales, Talleres de Arpilleras)**

**Magalí Arriola / Curator**



Rometti Costales, *Song for a Singing Fossil II*, 2019. Lost wax cast bronze. Work commissioned by Kadist and the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago

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